

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 12492 291342Z

53

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E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PINT, IR

SUBJ: STUDENT UNREST--16TH OF AZAR DEMONSTRATIONS

AND BEYOND

REFS: (A) TEHRAN 10865; (B) 74 TEHRAN A-187

SUMMARY: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE CONTINUED AT ALL TEHRAN UNIVERSITIES, BUT SPECIAL EVENTS NORMALLY STAGED TO COMMEMORATE 16TH OF AZAR (DECEMBER 7) WERE LESS SEVERE THAN IN PAST AND APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN RANDOM EXERCISES IN UNSTRUCTURED VIOLENCE, THOUGH THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE OF POLITICAL MOTIVES AND OUTSIDE ENCOURAGEMENT. NEWS OF LOCAL STUDENT RIOTS STILL HAS BEEN EXCLUDED FROM LOCAL MEDIA. END SUMMARY

1. FROM SCATTERED FACULTY, STUDENT, AND GOVERNMENT SOURCES EMBASSY HAS ASSEMBLED AT LEAST PARTIAL PICTURE OF CONTINUATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED REF A. GOI HAS CONTINUED TO CENSOR NEWS OF STUDENT DISTURBANCES IN IRAN, BUT PRESS ON DECEMBER 9 BRIEFLY REPORTED "MISGUIDED" ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES OF IRANIAN STUDENTS ABROAD. TEHRAN JOURNAL EDITORIALLY CONDEMNED ANTI-GOI ACTIONS OF IRANIAN STUDENTS ABROAD ON DECEMBER 11, AND KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL ON DECEMBER 14 CALLED FOR BETTER EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AS MEANS OF INCREASING POSITIVE STUDENT INTERESTS.

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 12492 291342Z

2. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AT TEHRAN UNIVERSITIES

WERE LESS VIOLENT THAN IN PAST, WITH MAJOR ACTIVITY
FOCUSED ON NATIONAL UNIVERSITY. THERE STUDENTS
WRECKED SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, BREAKING ALL WINDOWS
AND MUCH FURNITURE, INCLUDING PICTURES OF THE SHAH,
AND SHOUTED, "DEATH TO THE SHAH," AND, "NO MORE
WAR IN DHOFAR." ENGINEERING STUDENTS AT NATIONAL
ALSO ENGAGED IN RANDOM DESTRUCTION; POLITICAL SCIENCE
AND LITERATURE STUDENTS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN UNSEASONABLY
QUIET. NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT RADICALS REPORTEDLY
CALLED FOR CONTINUING UNIVERSITY-WIDE BOYCOTT OF CLASSES
TO BEGIN ON 16 AZAR, BUT THIS HAS BEEN ONLY PARTIALLY
EFFECTIVE AND IS EASING UP THIS WEEK. IN SOME
SCHOOLS OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, GANGS OF 10-15 STUDENTS
ENTERED CLASSES AND THREATENED STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED.
SAVAK IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE ARRESTED "SEVERAL" STUDENTS
DURING PRIOD DECEMBER 7-14. IN AT LEAST THREE
REPORTED CASES, MODERATE STUDENTS DEFENDED THEIR
RIGHT TO STAY IN CLASS, AND IN ONE INSTANCE
PREVENTED RADICAL GANG WHICH INVADED CLASS
FROM BEATING UP PROFESSOR. INCIDENTS THERE HAVE
CONTINUED DURING PAST TWO WEEKS, WITH LAST MAJOR
DESTRUCTION OF FURNITURE DECEMBER 16.

3. TEHRAN UNIVERSITY WAS COMPARATIVELY QUIET,
BUT ENGINEERING STUDENTS REPORTEDLY VIRTUALLY
DESTROYED INTERIOR OF ENGINEERING BUILDING, AND
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING IS CLOSED AGAIN AFTER BEING
OPEN FOR A BRIEF SPELL IN LATE NOVEMBER. EVEN
FACULTY MEMBERS ARE BEING KEPT OUT OF ENGINEERING
BUILDING. GOI HAS STATIONED GENDARMES AT ENTRANCE
TO TEHRAN UNIVERSITY AND CHECKED ID CARDS FOR
SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE AND AFTER 16 AZAR, AND THIS
REPORTEDLY HAD A DAMPENING EFFECT ON STUDENT
ACTIVITIES, AS DID NEWS THAT GOI NOW READYING
LEGISLATION SEEKING MAXIMUM FIVE-YEAR PRISON TERM
FOR THIS TYPE OF ANTI-REGIME ACTIVITY INSTEAD OF
THE PRESENT SIX MONTHS.

4. TEHRAN POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE SAW ITS FIRST RIOT
THIS YEAR BETWEEN DECEMBER 14-19 WHEN ESTIMATED
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PAGE 03 TEHRAN 12492 291342Z

CROWD OF 500 STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED. WHAT STUDENTS
WERE PROTESTING IS NOT KNOWN, BUT BOTH UNIVERSITY
AND POLITICAL ISSUES APPEARED ON PLACARDS, INCLUDING
"NO DHOFAR WAR" SLOGAN.

5. GOI SOURCE REPORTS HAMADAN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
REMAINS CLOSED AFTER ADDITIONAL STUDENT RIOTS IN
LATE NOVEMBER AND EARLY DECEMBER. DISTURBANCES

ALSO REPORTEDLY TOOK PLACE AT SOME OTHER PROVINCIAL UNIVERSITIES, BUT THESE ARE NOT CONSIDERED SERIOUS BY GOI.

6. FACULTY MEMBERS WHO DEALT WITH STUDENTS DURING THIS PERIOD ARE SOMEWHAT MYSTIFIED AS TO MOTIVATION AND GOALS OF STUDENTS. ONE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR HAS DESCRIBED PREVAILING STUDENT MOOD AS ONE OF GENERAL FRUSTRATION OVER ISSUES OF UNIVERSITY FOOD, CLASS HOURS, AND UNIVERSITIES' ATTEMPTS TO DISMISS OLDER STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN HANGING ON FOR YEARS AND INDOCTRINATING NEW STUDENTS IN RADICAL IDEAS AND ISSUES. OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS SEE VIOLENCE AS RANDOM AND ONLY MARGINALLY CONNECTED WITH SPECIFIC ISSUES, SOMEGLOYZHODHWWTGDTNP-YM IN (SOMETIMES WITH A PUSH FROM RADICAL ACTIVISTS) BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME ALMOST TRADITIONAL. IT IS CLEAR FROM CONTEXT OF DEMONSTRATIONS THAT SOME STUDENT GROUPS--FOR EXAMPLE THOSE IN ECONOMICS AND ENGINEERING--HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE ENERGETIC IN DEMONSTRATING THAN OTHERS. THIS IS ASCRIBED TO DIFFERENCES IN STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND STAFF REACTION. PRESENCE OF SUCH SLOGANS AS "NO MORE WAR IN DHOFAR" SUGGESTS PROMPTING, IF NOT DISCREET AGITATION, FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES ACTING THROUGH SMALL RADICAL STUDENT GROUPS.

7. MOST PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE ACTIVITY SEE CONTINUED SPORADIC RIOTS, ATTEMPTED BOYCOTTS OF CLASSES AND OCCASIONAL DEMONSTRATIONS OVER LOCAL ISSUES SUCH AS CAFETERIA FOOD, BUS FARES, AND INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS. PROSPECTS FOR MAJOR GOI-STUDENT CONFRONTATION APPEAR SLIM, BUT LONG-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS COMMENTED THAT "NORMAL" IN IRANIAN UNIVERSITY CONTEXT IS NOW

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PAGE 04 TEHRAN 12492 291342Z

COMING TO INCLUDE CERTAIN AMOUNTS OF ABOVE ACTIVITIES AT ALL TIMES, "JUST LIKE BERKLEY."

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